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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 002946

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2033
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KOLY](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: AS PRC OLYMPIC PREPARATIONS HIT THE FINAL SPRINT,
CHINESE ANXIETY REIGNS

REF: A. OSC/FBIS CPP20080714584003
[1](#)B. OSC/FBIS CPP20080716172010
[1](#)C. OSC/FBIS CPP20080711704002
[1](#)D. OSC/FBIS FEA20080723734391
[1](#)E. OSC/FBIS CPP20080717968261
[1](#)F. BEIJING 2864
[1](#)G. OSC/FBIS FEA20080725736000

Classified By: Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Stories in official media focusing on security concerns, threats of terrorism, incidents of explosions and alleged uncovered terrorist cells in the run-up to the Olympics have led to intense government scrutiny of and fear among the local population. Despite some accusations aimed at "overseas anti-Chinese forces," the media's identification of domestic threats such as "East Turkestan terrorists," "Tibetan separatists," "Falungong believers" and "dissatisfied persons in society," all threats largely from within the PRC population, has heightened the general public's sense of fear. Xinjiang experts in Beijing and Urumqi echo media hype of the likelihood of an "attack" during the Olympics by "East Turkestan forces." Resulting paranoia, as described in a blog entry that has been a hit among China's netizens in recent days, is coinciding with increased pressure on Uighurs and even ethnic Mongolians living in Beijing. Han Chinese also complain that "security measures" have not increased people's sense of security, but rather made them feel more vulnerable. As local business suffers because of security measures, traffic controls and the exit of thousands of migrant workers from the city, it appears that a variety of social groups, including government officials, are ready for the Olympics to be over. A video allegedly produced by the "Turkestan Islamic Party" (TIP), which claims responsibility for recent explosions in Kunming, Wenzhou, Guangzhou and Shanghai, has added to pre-Olympic anxiety among the Chinese public despite relatively limited Mainland media coverage of its release. END SUMMARY.

Official Media Stoke Olympics Security Fears

[1](#)2. (U) A July 13 article in the CCP flagship newspaper, the People's Daily, reads that the "March 14" riots in Lhasa, Tibet, "sounded an alarm to Beijing" and argues that those incidents along with the recent "uncovering of terror cells" in Xinjiang show that "overseas anti-Chinese forces" are willing to use violence "on behalf of Tibetan independence and Xinjiang independence" (ref A). "The threats facing the Beijing Olympic Games have exceeded those facing Games of the past," states the article, adding that the goal of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the XXIX Olympic Games (BOCOG) has shifted from hosting "the best Olympics" to hosting a "secure Olympics." In contrast to the People's Daily, Li Wei, a counterterrorism expert at the Ministry of

State Security-affiliated China Institutes for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), gave greater importance to threats from within China than to threats from outside when he called attention to -- in this order -- "East Turkestan terrorists," "Tibetan separatists," "Falungong believers," "dissatisfied persons in society" and "international terrorists" as the "enemies" of the Beijing Olympic Games in a July 16 interview with state media (ref B). The Beijing Youth Daily on July 11 published a notice from the Municipal Public Security Bureau offering rewards ranging from RMB 10,000-500,000 (USD 1,500-73,000) for information leading to the prevention of incidents caused by "violent terrorism" or "Falungong and other cults" (ref C).

Blog Entry Resonates with Chinese Netizens

13. (U) While discussing the "Kunming explosions" (ref D), "my colleagues and I all shared the view that it is best not to leave home if necessary, and not go to crowded areas during this time," a blogger pen-named Li Puman wrote in recent days. The entry has resonated with netizens, as many quickly re-posted Li's piece, entitled "Our Fragile Sense of Security," on a number of popular websites and chat rooms. Steps such as publishing a "manual" on what to do in case of a terrorist attack issued this month by the Ministry of Public Security have made Li feel like he "could bump into (terrorists) at any time" (ref E). Li suggests the general public cannot help but feel "alarmed and suspicious" in the current environment because "security measures" have not increased people's sense of security, but rather made them

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feel more vulnerable. "The Olympics are here and in the interest of Olympic security, we can tolerate a lot of inconvenience," comments Li. "But as the Government carries out this work, shouldn't it at the same time keep in mind the feelings of the common people and related nerve-calming work?"

CASS Xinjiang Expert Hypes the ETIM Threat to Olympics

14. (C) Embassy contacts in academia echo the tone and fear evident in local state-run media, with special attention paid to perceived threats from China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) Xinjiang expert Li Sheng (strictly protect) told PolOffs July 18 he believes there is a "more than 50-percent chance" that "East Turkestan" forces will "attempt" a violent terrorist attack during the Olympics. Asked if the Government is focusing on international terrorists in addition to "East Turkestan" forces, he replied that "East Turkestan" forces are in fact an international threat, and cited the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a predominately "international group."

15. (C) Ma Pinyan (strictly protect) an expert on religious extremism and counterterrorism at the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences in Urumqi, XUAR, told PolOff on July 17 that he believes Beijing security is too tight to allow an attack in the nation's capital, but said there is a strong chance of an incident in Xinjiang during the Olympics. Ma refused to attribute the recent surge in reporting on thwarted "terrorist" attacks and disruption of "terrorist cells" in Xinjiang as a public awareness campaign, asserting rather that the "terrorists" are becoming more active as the Olympics approach. Li Sheng, however, suggested that timing of the reported public sentencing and execution of three "East Turkestan terrorists" in Kashgar on July 9, one month before the start of the Games, is a clear sign to potential troublemakers "not to disrupt the Olympics" (ref F).

Scholar: CT a "New Issue," Government "Very Nervous"

16. (C) Director of South Asian, Middle Eastern and African

Studies at the Foreign Ministry-affiliated China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Li Guofu (strictly protect) noted to PolOffs as early as February 2008 that a broad problem the Government faces is how to increase public vigilance toward terrorism without upsetting "social peace and happiness." Li was skeptical of China's Olympic security preparedness, repeatedly stressing that Chinese security forces have "no experience" with counterterrorism work and that they are "very, very nervous." The stress on the Government is understandably high. Zhang Dajun, Co-Founder of the Beijing-based Transition Institute think tank (strictly protect), told PolOff that Party officials across Beijing "all cannot wait for the Olympics to be over."

Authorities Worried about "Dangerous" Ethnic Groups?

17. (C) CASS's Li Sheng said that security organs aim to "understand the circumstances" of every non-resident in Beijing, regardless of what ethnicity, country or even province from which he or she comes. However, contacts around Beijing suggest that authorities are paying special attention to particular ethnic minority groups. A Beijing native (strictly protect) who works at a state-owned company in Beijing said that at an office retreat this spring, the staff had to attend a pre-Olympic security lecture in which they were encouraged to immediately call the police if they noticed Tibetans or Uighurs engaging in "strange behavior." A popular Shanghai English-language blog recently posted a security notice from Shanghai's "Tomorrow Square" office tower complex that alerts the public to immediately report to the guard staff if "Tibetans, Uighurs or ethnic Hui from Qinghai's Hualong County enter the tower." (NOTE: Though Hualong County is famous in Qinghai Province for underground gun production, Post is unaware of a separatist threat there.) An ethnic Kazakh professor from Xinjiang told PolOff in May that ethnic minority police officers, including one of his own family members, have been recruited to assist with security in Olympic host cities in recent months because of their language abilities. He offered no further information on the numbers or duties of such recruits.

18. (C) A Uighur native of Kashgar working as a musician in
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Beijing (strictly protect) told PolOff in May that undercover police often visit the bar where his band performs because of the substantial number of Uighurs who frequent the establishment. On July 14, the same contact told PolOff that police had visited his apartment twice in recent weeks to "ask for ID" and take pictures inside his apartment. Because of this pressure, he says he will begrudgingly return to Kashgar for the duration of the Olympics.

19. (C) A 26-year-old ethnic Mongolian surnamed Li who works at an American-run public relations firm (strictly protect) in Beijing told PolOff that the police are thwarting her Beijing residence permit renewal, a procedure that she says has been an annual, five-minute routine for the past eight years. Li is actually only one-eighth Mongolian and does not even speak any Mongolian language, but her mother chose to register her as an ethnic Mongolian at birth so that she could enjoy education and family planning benefits for ethnic minorities. She has made numerous trips to her Beijing neighborhood police department over the past several weeks, only to be told each time that she needs to provide another document to secure the signature of a higher official. One police officer at the station told her that they had no record of her residence permit, while another bluntly told her that her renewal is facing difficulties because Mongolians are one of the "three dangerous ethnic groups," which also include Uighurs and Tibetans.

¶10. (SBU) While the nationalistic, CCP-sponsored Global Times newspaper reported the TIP video, calling it a "good opportunity for China to rebut international criticism," and Cankao Xiaoxi (a Chinese-language digest of international press pieces) reprinted articles from Hong Kong and Taiwan on the video, most Mainland media neglected to cover the story (ref G). State media have quoted local government officials and CICIR expert Li Wei stating that terrorism had nothing to do with the explosions in southern China. Multiple postings of the TIP video are available on YouTube, but the connection timed out when PolOff twice tried on two different (non-Embassy) computers to view the video, suggesting government censorship. Youku.com, a PRC-based, Chinese-language clone of YouTube, is not carrying the video.

¶11. (C) Tsinghua University School of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean and advisor to the Beijing Municipal Government Li Qiang (strictly protect) told PolOff on July 29 he had not even heard of the TIP video, but asserted that Beijing would downplay such a story out of fear that publicizing such an open threat from Uighur terrorists would risk causing panic. Tsinghua's Li believes that the Chinese Government is very concerned about an incident at the Games and just about anybody could pose a threat. An incident-free Games is now the priority, even if it raises the risk of Chinese security forces overstepping and harming the image of the Games, said Li.

RANDT